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	ABSTRACT	
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Chief, KUCLUB

National Communications System Status Report

ACTION REQUIRED - REFERENCES

1. On 16 May the Subcommittee on Communications held what may have been its last meeting. Mr. William H. Orrick the Subcommittee chairman has returned to the Department of Justice for duty and the Subcommittee's "final report" to the National Security Council was prepared. (The Subcommittee was split in its opinion as to whether it should remain in being pending action on one of its recommendations). In its final report the Subcommittee summarized actions to date and recommended approval of a proposed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) which would establish a National Communications System (NCS) which will be; "developed by blending together, improving, and extending on an evolutionary basis the communications facilities and components of the various Federal Agencies".

2. The recommended NSAM proposes that the Director of Telecommunications Management, Office of Emergency Planning be designated to also serve in the capacity of a Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications and in this capacity provide policy direction for the development and operation of the NCS. This OEP position is currently vacant and from what can be learned from an ear to the ground, no nominee is prominent at this time.

3. The Executive Agent for the NCS, as proposed by the NSAM, will be the Secretary of Defense, who, in all likelihood, will delegate his functional responsibilities to the Director, Defense Communications Agency. This position is currently held by Lt. General Alfred D. Starbird who is not a communicator but who has demonstrated a remarkable ability to understand his new field of endeavor during the short time he has held this position. Gen. Starbird was a former [redacted] at West Point and has also served with [redacted] during a previous tour of government service with a civilian agency. He has most favorably impressed all Headquarters personnel who have worked with him and he has shown a clear awareness of KUBARK's needs for privacy of communications.

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17 June 1963

DISPATCH SYMBOL AND NUMBER

HEADQUARTERS FILE NUMBER

- 1 - OC-NC
- 1 - [redacted] (O/Comp)
- 2 - DD/CO (file, chron)
- 1 - each -  
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OFFICE

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4. From previous talks with Gen. Starbird we know he plans to establish a full time permanent advisory committee of senior representatives of the major government organizations having communications networks. This committee will assist the Executive Agent in determining what the NCS will encompass and what shall be the responsibilities to be undertaken by the various operating agencies of the NCS. KUCLOB will represent KUBARK on this committee. We have not talked with General Starbird about the specifics of the NCS beyond what is said above but an acceptable outline of the concepts of the NCS is available.

5. By extracting from a report prepared by a working group of the Subcommittee on Communications we have the following:

a. The unilateral communications efforts of the several government agencies provide a significant measure of capability but lack the cohesiveness that characterizes a true system; they should, by a gradual and orderly process, be formed into a skeleton which would then be fleshed out to serve the national interest. This process should attain inter operability and technical compatibility, taking into account the economics of the situation, but assiduously avoid irrational conformity or standardization.

b. The NCS should provide a communications capability girdling the globe with routing and coverage to all continents and to sea areas and land masses having significant U. S. national interests and terminating at key nodal points. From these nodal points in the system, specialized nets, subsystems and other applications to meet peculiar users needs should emanate under the exclusive control of the user.

c. The NCS should not be responsible for operating, servicing or administering facilities extending beyond nodal points.

d. The NCS should provide secure privacy to users where this requirement is based on national security considerations.

e. The NCS should provide speed of service, capacity and quality adequate to meet specific user needs, with sufficient capacity to meet surge conditions for short durations until specialized traffic discipline and other measures can be implemented.

f. The NCS should assure that the high level of performance required by specialized users in the national security interest is met. From a technical point of view the system should not be required or permitted to perform on the "lowest common denominator" principle to satisfy the needs of particular users to the detriment of service to other users.

g. The NCS should assure the security of the system from a physical and communications security point of view.

h. The NCS should provide a system engineering approval to national communications that will (1) insure the technical integrity of the system, (2) assure that the system is continually engineered to preclude gaps in communications coverage in the system, (3) introduce new developments resulting from "state of the art" advances, and (4) insure against irrational duplication of communications facilities.

i. The NCS should seek to provide systems direction but it should also seek decentralization by utilizing existing agencies as operators of the various components.

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j. In the operation of the system, the central mechanism should determine for the system the location of key nodal points beyond which the fulfillment of communications needs becomes the responsibility of the user.

k. To maintain the integrity and reliability of an NCS the programming, the consolidation of funding and recommendations as to agency responsibility for budgeting for components of the NCS, should be undertaken by the control mechanism.

6. From the above you can see that while an NCS is practically inevitable, this should not mean that KUBARK will lose control of its communications network nor lose the identity of that network within the NCS. There has been no indication whatsoever at a national level that KUBARK will lose control of its communications system or lose its identity within the NCS. In Headquarters we visualize a confederation of government communications efforts to form an NCS which could be broadly compared to the many independent telephone companies in the U.S. which form the Bell Telephone System with its common standards of technical compatibility and service but with independent operation. In connection with subparagraphs b, c, and j. above, Headquarters will endeavor to have our relay bases such as [redacted] etc., designated as nodal points from which our specialized networks would extend downward. There will have to be some sort of negotiation on this point, however, since we would have to recognize that frequently these networks have national interest character since they serve so many customers. We might therefore concede that we should report our "circuit, out" status to some central mechanism for national interest purposes even though we consider the nets as specialized circuits.

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7. Important to you at this time is the understanding that while there has been a proposal to establish an NCS, there is in fact no such animal at this time. Outside of the report cited in paragraph 5 above, there is no accepted definition of what the NCS shall be or how it will be operated in detail. It is safe only to say that these details will be resolved slowly when the proposed NSAM is approved and signed. Until these details have been settled we must all act in concert to protect KUBARK interests in the communications field. This is particularly important in extending the concept of the Consolidated Communications Center (CCC) to posts beyond those identified in Mr. Orrick's Action Directives or those included in our own approved FY 64 program. The financing for the Action Directives came from a special source and this ends with the end of FY 63, and even when in force these funds had limitations. In FY 64 KUBARK must pick up the continuing costs of these Action Directive stations and this is considerable. In addition, there have been questions raised at the Congressional level regarding KUBARK's undertaking a program of this magnitude for other than its own usage. As a result, this could lead to cuts in our requested budget which could change the whole picture of our FY-64 program. All of the above is presented to give you a picture of conditions at Headquarters and to promote caution on your part in undertaking additional efforts even though they appear to be in the over-all best interests of all concerned. It is requested that you limit distribution of this document to yourself and senior members of your immediate staff.

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